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Professional Development in the Arts





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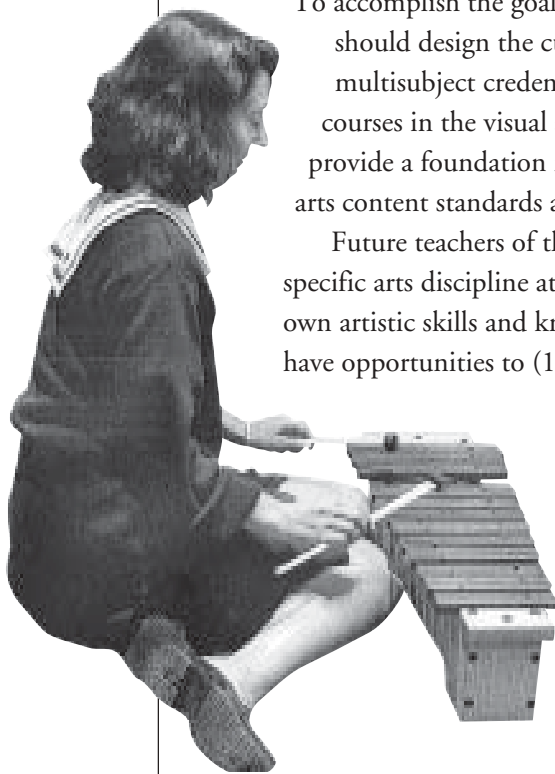
Successful implementation of the visual and performing arts content standards depends on effective teacher preparation (i.e., preservice training) and long-term professional development. Two important findings about professional development in the arts were revealed in a survey published by the California Department of Education.¹ The survey indicated that teachers trained in the arts are more likely to teach the arts. It serves as a reminder that many classroom teachers have not received training or professional development in how to teach the arts. The survey also confirmed that, in addition to the teachers, community members with artistic skills are involved in teaching the arts in the schools.

Teacher Preparation in the Arts

To accomplish the goals of this framework, teacher education programs should design the curriculum for the benefit of those pursuing multisubject credentials and those planning to teach single-subject courses in the visual and performing arts. The curriculum should provide a foundation in the arts that addresses the visual and performing arts content standards and the five related strands.

Future teachers of the visual and performing arts should major in a specific arts discipline at the college or university level and develop their own artistic skills and knowledge. In preservice arts education they should have opportunities to (1) plan and assess arts learning systematically;

(2) gain an understanding of arts pedagogy, including processes and strategies for arts instruction appropriate to the ages and abilities of students; (3) develop strategies for working with diverse student populations; and (4) gain experience in the use of new media and electronic technology relevant to teaching, learning, or performing the arts.



¹ *The Results of the Arts Work Survey of California Public Schools*. Sacramento: California Department of Education, 2001.

Organization of Professional Development in the Arts

Implementing standards-based visual and performing arts programs challenges school district administrators planning professional development for teachers. The sequential nature of the standards in each of the arts and the comprehensive approach of including the five strands require many teachers at all levels to become more knowledgeable about the arts and effective ways in which to teach them.

Ongoing professional development should be planned for both generalists who teach the arts and arts specialists and should be offered locally and regularly. Because effective professional development requires long-term efforts, it should be focused on increasing teachers' knowledge of and practice in the arts and their ability to teach the arts. All professional development programs in the arts should be based on the content standards and guidelines presented in the *Visual and Performing Arts Framework*. Training should prepare teachers to use the state-adopted arts instructional materials effectively in kindergarten through grade eight. The training can be particularly useful for teachers in schools with limited resources and access to only a few district specialists. Those who provide professional development programs must be able to demonstrate the effectiveness of their recommendations for the typically diverse California classroom and be competent to instruct teachers.

Schools and school districts should support teachers' lifelong learning with released time and funding in ongoing, planned professional development programs coordinated at the district level. Professional development may include courses at institutions of higher education; participation in meetings and conferences of regional, state, and national education and arts education organizations; and institutes and workshops offered by The California Arts Project (TCAP) and professional arts organizations. (See Selected References and Resources for information on contacting arts education organizations.)

Resources for Professional Development in Arts Education

The resources listed in Selected References and Resources include information on organizations that identify or provide professional development programs in arts education. Often, they are as close as the regional site of The California Arts Project, the state professional development project in the visual and performing arts, or one of the four professional arts teacher associations: the California Dance Educators Association, the California Association for Music Education, the California Educational Theatre Association, and the California Arts Education Association.

Some communities have city or county arts agencies that can also be valuable resources, and some colleges and universities have outreach programs providing assistance to schools in teaching the arts. Often, institutions of higher education provide special programs for teachers to advance their learning in and teaching of the arts and include courses in the arts in their teacher preparation programs as requirements for receiving teaching credentials.

Throughout the state arts education consultants and arts providers (e.g., museums, symphonies, music centers, opera and dance companies, folk art providers) employ education and outreach personnel who may be helpful in professional development. And nonprofit arts organizations often focus their work on advocating arts education in the schools and provide professional development for teachers and instruction for students. The California online resource center for the arts at <http://www.TeachingArts.org> provides valuable help in planning professional development programs.

Workshops, demonstrations, and peer reviews provide useful information for arts specialist teachers and classroom teachers. Teachers can participate in workshops with peers; view and analyze demonstration lessons or exchange classroom visits; receive coaching and mentoring from district lead teachers or specialists; and work with resident or visiting artists. It is important that those receiving professional development in the arts are provided with time to discuss with their peers ways to implement the concepts and techniques presented in professional development programs. Often, county offices of education offer professional development opportunities for teachers from several school districts. They may bring in professional artists to work with students in the classroom setting while the classroom teacher observes the techniques being taught.

Professional development also benefits guest or resident artists working at any level to extend and enrich the arts curriculum. They too require orientation to the arts content standards and the curriculum together with information on effective teaching strategies matched to intended curriculum outcomes. Many artists working in the schools appreciate professional development that will help them adapt their knowledge of content and artistic processes.

Content of Professional Development in the Arts

If the vision of a standards-based arts education for all students in every grade is to be achieved, teachers of the arts must be trained in critical areas. During preservice education and through long-term professional development, those areas are further developed, refined, and expanded throughout the teachers' careers.

Teachers should engage in ongoing professional development to acquire knowledge of (1) the strands of the arts content standards, including, when

appropriate, training related to state-adopted visual and performing arts instructional materials; (2) processes and products in arts education; (3) the interdependence and independence of the arts; (4) the arts and learning across the curriculum; (5) affective and cognitive aspects of the arts; (6) world arts and cultures; (7) collaboration and articulation; (8) student assessment; and (9) the uses of new media and electronic technology.

1. Strands of the Arts Content Standards

Instruction in the arts content standards should center on the five strands of the arts content standards. Therefore, generalists teaching the arts should understand and have experience with the strands: artistic perception, creative expression, historical and cultural context, aesthetic valuing, and connections, relationships, and applications. For kindergarten through grade eight, a set of key standards in each of the five strands has been identified in this framework. A professional development program may begin by emphasizing the key standards and training related to the state-adopted visual and performing arts instructional materials.

Teachers must determine what students learned in the arts in prior grades because the standards for dance, music, theatre, and the visual arts are based on those earlier experiences. Because growth in knowledge and skills is cumulative, students are continually constructing meaning. They are able, through the five strands and the content standards, to gain the breadth of knowledge and skills needed to experience an arts discipline from varied perspectives. In the same manner teachers who have learned an arts discipline as creators and thoughtful critics are better prepared to teach that discipline.

2. Processes and Products in Arts Education

Focusing on the arts processes (how) and products or performances (what), arts teachers should explore the learning involved in producing a product or performance because it is important to student achievement. Achievement is accomplished through purposeful teacher-guided reflection during the learning process and completion of a product or performance.

Through experimentation or exploration students engaged in the arts learn by doing and gain an understanding of the depth of the knowledge and skills required in each of the arts disciplines. Examples of beginning work and works in progress captured in photographs and portfolios or on audiocassettes can be presented in concerts or exhibitions. And videos of students' performances can be shown, together with the culminating works, to demonstrate hard work, discipline, progress, and the artistic process.

3. Interdependence and Independence of the Arts

Professional development for teachers needs to include acquisition of knowledge and skills in specific arts disciplines and recognition of the connections between the various disciplines. This knowledge and these skills will provide a means for teachers to deepen their understanding of particular disciplines and recognize points of contact and areas of contrast in relation to the other arts and other content areas.

4. The Arts Across the Curriculum

When teachers begin to understand the arts and become proficient in teaching them, they become aware of natural connections to learning across the curriculum. Together, arts specialist teachers, classroom teachers of the arts, and teachers of other content areas are responsible for helping students make such connections. Therefore, professional development programs should inform teachers of appropriate, successful strategies to help students apply what they have learned.

5. Affective and Cognitive Aspects of the Arts

Arts education requires the use of all the cognitive processes commonly needed to master other academic disciplines. Although the ability to express emotion through the arts is regarded by some as the essence of the arts, it goes hand in hand with the power of the arts to expand mental processes. When students engage in the arts, they can experience the joy, exhilaration, and thrill of creative accomplishment as creators or members of an audience. Those experiences, which involve emotions, reveal connections, and spark insights, expand students' knowledge and create a lifelong love and appreciation for the arts.

6. World Arts and Cultures

A broad base of knowledge for teachers of the arts should include knowledge of various world cultures, religious and ceremonial arts, and the American arts, such as musical theatre, mural painting, modern dance, and jazz. Through these rich experiences teachers can view the arts from many different personal or cultural lenses, and the curriculum can reflect the many sources from which American culture has derived its powerful vigor.

7. Collaboration and Articulation

At any grade level standards-based arts programs succeed when collaboration takes place. Such collaboration begins with the planning process, involving classroom teachers; arts specialists in dance, music, theatre, and the visual arts; and artists from the community who may participate in classroom instruction. They articulate the program together with the others responsible for developing and confirming the curriculum and resources:

school and school district administrators; curriculum specialists at the district and, perhaps, county levels; faculty from institutions of higher education; arts resource persons from the community; teachers at other grade levels or in other departments; and school librarians, who can help identify appropriate literature and technology resources. The same cooperation and articulation should follow through to the implementation of the program.

8. Student Assessment

Student learning in each of the arts can be assessed. Professional development that includes efforts to understand the purpose and types of assessment and the application of assessments to each of the arts, together with opportunities to develop and implement assessment strategies embedded in student learning, strengthens curriculum and instruction. The design and scoring of assessments should include grounding the lessons in the visual and performing arts content standards and developing and using scoring rubrics reflecting students' application of their knowledge and skills in the five strands of each arts discipline. Teachers skilled in performance assessment at the classroom level should also collaborate with others at the school and school district levels to design assessments for accountability (see Chapter 5).

9. Uses of New Media and Electronic Technology

Teachers can reach all students best when the teachers keep up-to-date on the uses of new media and electronic technology in the arts. They should know how to use new media and electronic technology as a resource, for recording and delivery, and as a tool. When teachers have frequent opportunities to learn about and use a variety of technologies, they become comfortable with the media, are willing to experiment, and can select resources appropriate to meet various learning styles.

